

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

Appellants : Ivan KING and Li-Mou ZHENG
U.S. Serial No. : 10/738,423
Confirmation No. : 8783
Filed : December 16, 2003
Art Unit : 1633
Examiner : Qian Janice Li
For : COMPOSITIONS AND METHODS FOR TUMOR-
TARGETED DELIVERY OF EFFECTOR MOLECULES

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October 9, 2008

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir/Madam:

RESPONSE TO NOTIFICATION OF NON-COMPLIANT APPEAL BRIEF

A Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief (37 CFR 41.37) and a Notification of Non-Compliance with 37 CFR 1.192(c) were mailed on September 29, 2008. Reply to the Notifications must be submitted within the longest of one month or thirty days from the mailing date of the Notifications, i.e. by October 29, 2008. Accordingly, this response is being timely filed.

In the Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief (37 CFR 41.37), it is stated that the Appeal Brief filed July 11, 2008 was defective for containing new evidence on pages 9 and 16, and arguments relied on the new evidence, which have not been on record previously. Applicants submit that the

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 2		

Appeal Brief has been amended to delete the new evidence on pages 9 and 16, and the arguments that relied on the new evidence.

In the Notification of Non-Compliance with 37 CFR 1.192(c), it is stated that the brief omits the statement required by 37 CFR 1.192(c)(7) that one or more claims do not stand or fall together. In response, Applicants submit that any appeal brief filed on or after September 13, 2004 only needs to comply with 37 CFR 41.37, not 37 CFR 1.192 (*see* MPEP 1205.02). Per 37 CFR 41.37, “[f]or each ground of rejection applying to two or more claims, the claims may be argued separately or as a group. Any claim argued separately should be placed under a subheading identifying the claim by number” (*see also* MPEP 1205.02). Applicants submit that the previously filed appeal brief has already argued the claims separately, and placed the claims under separate subheadings identifying the claims by number.

The Notification of Non-Compliance with 37 CFR 1.192(c) requires Applicants to file the brief in triplicate. Pursuant to MPEP 1205.02, however, only one copy of the Appeal Brief is filed herein.

In view of the above remarks, Applicants submit that the appeal brief submitted herein has been amended to fully comply with 37 CFR 41.37.

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 3		

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	REAL PARTY IN INTEREST	4
II.	RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES	4
III.	STATUS OF CLAIMS	4
IV.	STATUS OF AMENDMENTS	4
V.	SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER	4
VI.	GROUND OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL	5
VII.	ARGUMENT	5
VIII.	CLAIMS APPENDIX	17
IX.	EVIDENCE APPENDIX	19
X.	RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX	20

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 4		

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is Vion Pharmaceuticals, Inc. by virtue of an assignment recorded on October 16, 2001, at Reel/Frame 012277/0251.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

No appeals or interferences have been filed to the knowledge of the Appellants, Applicants' undersigned attorney, or the assignee that are related to or would be affected by a decision by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences in this pending appeal.

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-112, and 114 have been canceled. Claims 113, 115-117, 119-124 were rejected; claims 118 and 125 were withdrawn from consideration. Consequently, claims 113, 115-117, 119-124 are currently appealed.

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

A Final Office Action was issued on December 20, 2007. No further amendments have been filed subsequent to the amendment filed October 22, 2007; therefore, no amendments were filed subsequent to final rejection.

V. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

Claim 113 is drawn to a method of inhibiting the growth of a solid tumor cancer, comprising administering to a subject an effective amount of cytoxan or cisplatin and an effective amount of a pharmaceutical composition comprising an attenuated tumor-targeted *Salmonella*, wherein the *Salmonella* comprises a msbB⁻ mutant. The present specification discloses a mutant msbB⁻ *Salmonella* strain VNP20009 (page 74, lines 8-9), and the uses of strain VNP20009 together with cytoxan or cisplatin (page 104, line 1 to page 106, line 20).

Claim 123 is drawn to a method of inhibiting the growth of a solid tumor cancer, comprising administering to a subject an effective amount of an anti-cancer compound and an effective amount

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 5		

of a pharmaceutical composition comprising an attenuated tumor-targeted *Salmonella*, wherein the *Salmonella* comprises a *msbB*⁻ mutant. The present specification discloses a mutant *msbB*⁻ *Salmonella* strain VNP20009 (page 74, lines 8-9), and the uses of strain VNP20009 together with an anti-cancer compound (page 104, line 1 to page 106, line 20).

VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Whether claims 113, 115-117, and 119-124 were properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Low et al. (Nature Biotechnology 1999; 17:155-64) (hereinafter "Low") in view of Schachter et al. (Cancer Biotherapy Radiopharmacology 1998; June: 13:155-64) (hereinafter "Schachter").

VII. ARGUMENT

The Final Office action of December 20, 2007 rejected claims 113, 115-117, and 119-124 over the combined disclosures of Low and Schachter. The Final Office action states the following:

- (a) Low teaches a method of treating tumors using an *msbB*⁻ *Salmonella* mutant which is attenuated and tumor-targeting.
- (b) Low teaches that such mutant may be administered to reduce the volume of melanoma solid tumors in a variety of subjects of different species.
- (c) Tests conducted by the investigators of the Low reference imply that the aforementioned bacteria can be safe for human use.
- (d) Schachter disclosed a routine regimen of chemotherapy comprising the chemotherapeutic agent cisplatin for treating human melanoma, and that the chemotherapeutic regimen had been clinically routine and therefore well-known in the art.
- (e) Schachter provides evidence that it is routine to combine chemotherapeutic therapies with newly developed biotherapies, and specifically, in the case of Schachter, a chemotherapy with a biotherapy involving cytokines that regulate the immune system of patients with metastatic melanoma. Schachter therefore supplements Low's deficiencies respecting dual modality of treatment.

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 6		

(f) Because Schacter also applied the cytokine biotherapy and chemotherapy sequentially, it would have been obvious for a person of ordinary skill in the art to apply the tumor-targeting bacteria of the instant application in a sequential manner with a chemotherapy.

(g) Schacter teaches a need for improvement of conventional chemotherapies with respect to response rate and displays that the response rate of patients is greater when a chemotherapy is used in conjunction with a biotherapy.

Applicants submit that the rejection of the claims is sustained by conclusory statements and an articulated reasoning with a rational underpinning has not been presented to support the legal conclusion as to obviousness.

Claims 113, 115-117, 119-122

The framework for the analysis of obviousness has been settled law. Three factual inquiries must be made to support obviousness:

- 1) establishing the scope and content of the prior art;
- 2) establishing the scope of the prior art and the claims at issue; and
- 3) establishing the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.

Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court reiterated the same in KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc. and elaborated on the standards for determining obviousness. *See generally* KSR International Co. v. Teleflex, 127 S.Ct. 1727 (2007) (hereinafter "KSR"). The Supreme Court also further iterated that, "[R]ejections on obviousness grounds cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements; instead, there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness." KSR at 1741 (quoting In re Kahn, 441 F.3d 977, 988 (CA Fed. 2006)).

Following this decision, the USPTO issued supplemental guidelines for examination. *See* Examination Guidelines for Determining Obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103 in View of the Supreme Court Decision in KSR v. Teleflex, Inc., 72 Fed. Reg. 57526 (October 10, 2007) (hereinafter "Examination Guidelines"). Applicants acknowledge that the USPTO has stated that these

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 7		

guidelines do not constitute substantive rulemaking and do not have the force and effect of law. Applicants do, however, believe that said guidelines offer evidence that an articulated reasoning with a rational underpinning for obviousness rejection is lacking with respect to the examination of this application.

The USPTO guidelines recite a non-exclusive list of examples of rationales which may be used to articulate a rejection based on obviousness, now at MPEP § 2143. These include:

- (A) Combining prior art elements according to known methods to yield predictable results;
- (B) Simple substitution of one known element for another to obtain predictable results;
- (C) Use of known technique to improve similar devices (methods, or products) in the same way;
- (D) Applying a known technique to a known device (method, or product) ready for improvement to yield predictable results;
- (E) "Obvious to try" - choosing from a finite number of identified, predictable solutions, with a reasonable expectation of success;
- (F) Known work in one field of endeavor may prompt variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces if the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art;
- (G) Some teaching, suggestion, or motivation in the prior art that would have led one of ordinary skill to modify the prior art reference or to combine prior art reference teachings to arrive at the claimed invention. *See Examination Guidelines at 57529.*

A review of this list suggest that the Examiner has attempted to employ certain of these arguments but the logic of the arguments is flawed, as demonstrated in the following section of this brief.

1. The Examiner's Stated Rationales Fail to Articulate Grounds for a "Reasonable Expectation of Success" or "Anticipated Success" When Combining the Teachings of Schachter and Low, and are Conclusory

In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness in this matter, it must be shown that as of

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 8		

Appellants' earliest filing date, the combination of Schachter and Low would have provided a reasonable expectation of success in arriving at the claimed subject matter. MPEP 2142 (*citing, In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991)). KSR reemphasized this by stating, "When there is a design need or market pressure to solve a problem and there are a finite number of identified, predictable solutions, a person of ordinary skill in the art has good reason to pursue the known options within his or her technical grasp. If this leads to the **anticipated success**, it is likely the product not of innovation but of ordinary skill and common sense." [Emphasis added.] KSR at 1742. As discussed below, the Examiner's Rationales fail to articulate grounds for a reasonable expectation of success or for anticipated success.

It appears that the Examiner has primarily attempted to frame the combination of Schachter and Low as, "Combining prior art elements according to known methods to yield predictable results," or alternatively, as "'Obvious to try' - choosing from a finite number of identified, predictable solutions, with a reasonable expectation of success." In the Office Action of December 20, 2007, the Examiner makes the following argument against the applicants:

Again, the instant situation is amenable to the type of analysis set forth in In re Kerkhoven, 205 USPQ 1069 (CCPA 1980), wherein the court held that it is *prima facie* obvious to combine two compositions each of which is taught by the prior art to be useful for the same purpose in order to produce a third composition that is to be used for the very same purpose since the idea of combining them flows logically from their having been individually taught in the prior art. [December 20, 2007 Office Action, p. 8.]

The Examiner further states:

Given the teaching of the prior art compositions of cisplatin and attenuated *Salmonella*-all taught to be useful for the treatment of cancer, it would have been *prima facie* obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine these compositions to generate a new composition for the treatment of cancer with a reasonable expectation of success. [Emphasis added] [December 20, 2007 Office Action, p. 8.]

And later cites KSR:

In response to the argument that there is no specific suggestion or teaching in the

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 9		

references to combine prior art, KSR forecloses the argument that a specific teaching, suggestion or motivation is required to support a finding [sic] of obviousness. [...] Here, all the recited elements were known in the art, and hence "THE COMBINATION OF FAMILIAR ELEMENTS ACCORDING TO KNOWN METHODS IS LIKELY TO BE OBVIOUS WHEN IT DOES NO MORE THAN YIELD PREDICTABLE RESULTS." KSR, 127 S. Ct. AT 1740, 82 USPQ2D AT 1395-96.

However, contained nowhere in the Examiner's rejections is there any rationale that results were "predictable" beyond the conclusory allegation that there would be a reasonable expectation of success when combining an anti-cancer chemotherapy with an anti-cancer biotherapy, generally. See December 20, 2007 Office Action, p. 5-6 (stating "*Schachter et al* further supplemented *Low et al* by illustrating it was routine to combine a chemotherapeutic regimen with a newly developed biotherapy in treating solid tumors such as melanoma. [...] [I]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the attenuated tumor-targeted mutant *Salmonella* therapy as taught by *Low et al* with a routine chemotherapeutic regimen as taught by *Schachter et al* with a reasonable expectation of success.").

2. A Person of Ordinary Skill in the Art Would Not Have Had a Reasonable Expectation of Success With Respect to the Combination of Low and Schachter As of the Date of Invention

At the time the present application for patent was filed, it was generally believed that there was a problem of *Salmonella* infection of various different strains in those patients with weakened immune systems, such as cancer patient populations subjected to chemotherapeutic regimens. Given that bacterial infection, and bacterial infection with *Salmonella*, was a well-known occurrence among immune-compromised cancer patients undergoing chemotherapeutic therapy, it would have been particularly counterintuitive to combine a live *Salmonella* bacterium shown to infect tumor-tissue with a conventional chemotherapy at the time of invention. Therefore, there could not have been a reasonable expectation of success respecting the combination of a conventional chemotherapy with the disclosed biotherapy of the instant application.

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 10		

3. The Stated Need in the Field of Endeavor is Overbroad, the Scope and Content of the Prior Art is Overbroad, and the Obviousness Rationale Fails to Evidence Predictability

Under KSR, “[A]ny need or problem known in the field of endeavor at the time of invention and addressed by the patent can provide a reason for combining the element in the manner cited.” KSR at 1742. This is echoed in rationale (F) which states that obviousness is present where “Known work in one field of endeavor may prompt variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces if the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art.” MPEP § 2143.

Here, the Examiner provides an extremely broad problem to be addressed: “The rationale for the design of the combined therapy was to achieve a higher percentage of a complete response (CR, meaning disappearance of all measurable disease) to drug treatment.” Final Office Action of December 20, 2007, p. 5. It is again emphasized that the need (as identified in Schachter) is one of “further improvement of the conventional chemotherapy.” *Id.* at 6.

Under the Examiner’s rationale, nearly any combination of therapies, however novel their use together might be at the time of invention, would be considered obvious if each separately performed a stated function of decreasing measurable disease. Applicants believe that if an obviousness claim were to succeed on such a broad rationale, experimentation in the chemotherapeutic and biotherapeutic arts would be stifled. Moreover, in the explanation of rationale (F), the MPEP states that, the Examiner should show that the scope and content of the prior art, whether in the same field of endeavor as that of the applicant’s invention or a different field of endeavor, included a similar or analogous device (method, or product). Applicants would attest that the devices of the prior art are not to be considered “analogous” simply because both are used to treat cancer (and solid tumors particularly). Applicants attest that the biotherapy of Schachter (i.e. a cytokine molecular therapy of interferon- α and GM-CSF), is too different from the biotherapy technology of the instant invention, i.e. a living, replicating bacteria, to form the basis of an obviousness rejection.

No incentives or market forces are identified beyond the generalized goal of improving

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 11		

chemotherapy and eliminating disease states, and as stated *infra*, the combination would not have been predictable at the time of invention.

Applicants are aware that under KSR, an analysis by the Examiner of whether there was an apparent reason to combine known elements "need not seek out precise teachings directed to the challenged claim's specific subject matter". KSR at 1741. However, Applicants maintain that the Examiner should show at minimum, more than a general motivation to improve the chemotherapeutic arts, or to combine chemotherapy with any new biotherapy; instead a motivation to combine a chemotherapy with a tumor-targeted *Salmonella* bacteria should be demonstrated.

Claims 123-124

The framework for the analysis of obviousness has been settled law. Three factual inquiries must be made to support obviousness:

- 1) establishing the scope and content of the prior art;
- 2) establishing the scope of the prior art and the claims at issue; and
- 3) establishing the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.

Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court reiterated the same in KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc. and elaborated on the standards for determining obviousness. *See generally* KSR International Co. v. Teleflex, 127 S.Ct. 1727 (2007) (hereinafter "KSR"). The Supreme Court also further iterated that, "[R]ejections on obviousness grounds cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements; instead, there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness." KSR at 1741 (quoting In re Kahn, 441 F.3d 977, 988 (CA Fed. 2006)).

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Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 12		

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A review of this list suggest that the Examiner has attempted to employ certain of these arguments but the logic of the arguments is flawed, as demonstrated in the following section of this brief.

1. The Examiner's Stated Rationales Fail to Articulate Grounds for a "Reasonable Expectation of Success" or "Anticipated Success" When Combining the Teachings of Schachter and Low, and are Conclusory

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Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 13		

reasonable expectation of success in arriving at the claimed subject matter. MPEP 2142 (*citing, In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991)). KSR reemphasized this by stating, "When there is a design need or market pressure to solve a problem and there are a finite number of identified, predictable solutions, a person of ordinary skill in the art has good reason to pursue the known options within his or her technical grasp. If this leads to the anticipated success, it is likely the product not of innovation but of ordinary skill and common sense." [Emphasis added.] KSR at 1742. As discussed below, the Examiner's Rationales fail to articulate grounds for a reasonable expectation of success or for anticipated success.

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The Examiner further states:

Given the teaching of the prior art compositions of cisplatin and attenuated *Salmonella*-all taught to be useful for the treatment of cancer, it would have been *prima facie* obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine these compositions to generate a new composition for the treatment of cancer with a reasonable expectation of success. [Emphasis added] [December 20, 2007 Office Action, p. 8.]

And later cites KSR:

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Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 14		

Here, all the recited elements were known in the art, and hence “THE COMBINATION OF FAMILIAR ELEMENTS ACCORDING TO KNOWN METHODS IF LIKELY TO BE OBVIOUS WHEN IT DOES NO MORE THAN YIELD PREDICTABLE RESULTS.” *KSR*, 127 S. Ct. AT 1740, 82 USPQ2D AT 1395-96.

However, contained nowhere in the Examiner’s rejections is there any rationale that results were “predictable” beyond the conclusory allegation that there would be a reasonable expectation of success when combining an anti-cancer chemotherapy with an anti-cancer biotherapy, generally. *See* December 20, 2007 Office Action, p. 5-6 (stating “*Schachter et al* further supplemented *Low et al* by illustrating it was routine to combine a chemotherapeutic regimen with a newly developed biotherapy in treating solid tumors such as melanoma. [...] [I]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the attenuated tumor-targeted mutant *Salmonella* therapy as taught by *Low et al* with a routine chemotherapeutic regimen as taught by *Schachter et al* with a reasonable expectation of success.”).

2. A Person of Ordinary Skill in the Art Would Not Have Had a Reasonable Expectation of Success With Respect to the Combination of Low and Schachter As of the Date of Invention

At the time the present application for patent was filed, it was generally believed that there was a problem of *Salmonella* infection of various different strains in those patients with weakened immune systems, such as cancer patient populations subjected to chemotherapeutic regimens. Given that bacterial infection, and bacterial infection with *Salmonella*, was a well-known occurrence among immune-compromised cancer patients undergoing chemotherapeutic therapy, it would have been particularly counterintuitive to combine a live *Salmonella* bacterium shown to infect tumor-tissue with a conventional chemotherapy at the time of invention. Therefore, there could not have been a reasonable expectation of success respecting the combination of a conventional chemotherapy with the disclosed biotherapy of the instant application.

3. The Stated Need in the Field of Endeavor is Overbroad, the Scope and Content of the Prior Art is Overbroad, and the Obviousness Rationale Fails to Evidence Predictability

Under *KSR*, “[A]ny need or problem known in the field of endeavor at the time of invention and

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 15		

addressed by the patent can provide a reason for combining the element in the manner cited.” KSR at 1742. This is echoed in rationale (F) which states that obviousness is present where “Known work in one field of endeavor may prompt variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces if the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art.” MPEP § 2143.

Here, the Examiner provides an extremely broad problem to be addressed: “The rationale for the design of the combined therapy was to achieve a higher percentage of a complete response (CR, meaning disappearance of all measurable disease) to drug treatment.” Final Office Action of December 20, 2007, p. 5. It is again emphasized that the need (as identified in Schachter) is one of “further improvement of the conventional chemotherapy.” *Id.* at 6.

Under the Examiner’s rationale, nearly any combination of therapies, however novel their use together might be at the time of invention, would be considered obvious if each separately performed a stated function of decreasing measurable disease. Applicants believe that if an obviousness claim were to succeed on such a broad rationale, experimentation in the chemotherapeutic and biotherapeutic arts would be stifled. Moreover, in the explanation of rationale (F), the MPEP states that, the Examiner should show that the scope and content of the prior art, whether in the same field of endeavor as that of the applicant’s invention or a different field of endeavor, included a similar or analogous device (method, or product). Applicants would attest that the devices of the prior art are not to be considered “analogous” simply because both are used to treat cancer (and solid tumors particularly). Applicants attest that the biotherapy of Schachter (i.e. a cytokine molecular therapy of interferon- α and GM-CSF), is too different from the biotherapy technology of the instant invention, i.e. a living, replicating bacteria, to form the basis of an obviousness rejection.

No incentives or market forces are identified beyond the generalized goal of improving chemotherapy and eliminating disease states, and as stated *infra*, the combination would not have been predictable at the time of invention.

Applicants : KING and ZHENG
USSN : 10/738,423
Filed : 12/16/2003
Examiner : Qian Janice Li
Page : 16

Atty. Dkt. No. : 873-Z-US
Art Unit : 1633
Date of Notice of Non-Compliance : September 29, 2008
Date of Appeal Brief : October 9, 2008

Applicants are aware that under KSR, an analysis by the Examiner of whether there was an apparent reason to combine known elements "need not seek out precise teachings directed to the challenged claim's specific subject matter". KSR at 1741. However, Applicants maintain that the Examiner should show at minimum, more than a general motivation to improve the chemotherapeutic arts, or to combine chemotherapy with any new biotherapy; instead a motivation to combine a chemotherapy with a tumor-targeted *Salmonella* bacteria should be demonstrated.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is respectfully suggested that the Honorable Board reverse the appealed rejections as not establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness. As described at length above, proper application of the methods for determining the motivation to combine the teachings and suggestions of Schachter with those of Low do not rise to the level of *prima facie* obviousness. In large part, the lack of motivation to combine the references is based on the fact that persons of ordinary skill in the art would not have had a reasonable expectation of success in arriving at the appealed claims, as of Appellant's earliest filing date.

Accordingly, reversal of all rejections under § 103(a) is respectfully requested. If any fee is required, authorization is hereby given to charge the amount of any such fee to Deposit Account No. 50-1891.

Respectfully submitted,



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Applicants : KING and ZHENG
USSN : 10/738,423
Filed : 12/16/2003
Examiner : Qian Janice Li
Page : 17

Atty. Dkt. No. : 873-Z-US
Art Unit : 1633
Date of Notice of Non-Compliance : September 29, 2008
Date of Appeal Brief : October 9, 2008

VIII. CLAIMS APPENDIX

113. (Previously presented) A method of inhibiting the growth of, or reducing the volume of a solid tumor cancer, comprising administering to a subject having a solid tumor cancer an effective amount of cytoxan or cisplatin and an effective amount of a pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier and an attenuated tumor-targeted *Salmonella*, wherein the *Salmonella* comprises an msbB⁻ mutant.
115. (Previously presented) The method of claim 113 wherein, the solid tumor or cancer is either a lung cancer or colon cancer.
116. (Previously presented) The method of claim 113 wherein the subject is a mammal.
117. (Previously presented) The method of claim 113 wherein the subject is a human.
119. (Previously presented) The method of claim 113, comprising administering an effective amount of cisplatin.
120. (Previously presented) The method of claim 113, wherein the administering of the attenuated tumor-targeted *Salmonella* msbB⁻ and the administering of the cytoxan or cisplatin are not performed concomitantly.

Applicants	: KING and ZHENG	Atty. Dkt. No.	: 873-Z-US
USSN	: 10/738,423	Art Unit	: 1633
Filed	: 12/16/2003	Date of Notice of Non-Compliance	: September 29, 2008
Examiner	: Qian Janice Li	Date of Appeal Brief	: October 9, 2008
Page	: 18		

121. (Previously presented) The method of claim 115, wherein the solid tumor cancer is a lung cancer.
122. (Previously presented) The method of claim 115, wherein the solid tumor cancer is a lung cancer.
123. (Previously presented) A method of inhibiting the growth of, or reducing the volume of a solid tumor cancer, comprising administering to a subject having a solid tumor cancer an effective amount of,
- (a) a pharmaceutical composition consisting essentially of an anti-cancer compound and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers, and
 - (b) an effective amount of a pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier and an attenuated tumor-targeted *Salmonella*, wherein the *Salmonella* comprises an msbB⁻ mutant.
124. (Previously presented) The method of claim 123 wherein the anti-cancer compound is cisplatin.

Applicants : KING and ZHENG
USSN : 10/738,423
Filed : 12/16/2003
Examiner : Qian Janice Li
Page : 19

Atty. Dkt. No. : 873-Z-US
Art Unit : 1633
Date of Notice of Non-Compliance : September 29, 2008
Date of Appeal Brief : October 9, 2008

IX. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None

Applicants : KING and ZHENG
USSN : 10/738,423
Filed : 12/16/2003
Examiner : Qian Janice Li
Page : 20

Atty. Dkt. No. : 873-Z-US
Art Unit : 1633
Date of Notice of Non-Compliance : September 29, 2008
Date of Appeal Brief : October 9, 2008

X. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None